

Message Text

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APPROVED BY S:THE SECRETARY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 008787

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PSDC, SY

SUBJECT:SECRETARY'S FAREWELL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT ASAD

1. PLEASE DELIVER FOLLOWING PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM
SECRETARY TO PRESIDENT ASAD.

2. BEGIN QUOTE:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

ON THE EVE OF MY DEPARTURE FROM OFFICE, I HAVE BEEN RE-
FLECTING ON THE HISTORIC PERIOD OF MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY
WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH TOGETHER, BEGINNING WITH OUR FIRST
FRUITFUL MEETING IN DAMASCUS IN DECEMBER 1973. THE MANY
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LONG HOURS OF NEGOTIATIONS, YOUR VIGOROUS BUT ALWAYS
STRAIGHTFORWARD DEFENSE OF SYRIAN INTERESTS, AND THE
HOSPITALITY ACCORDED ME HOWEVER FREQUENT MY VISITS AND
LATE THE HOUR--ALL THESE WILL BE MEMORIES I SHALL CARRY
WITH ME WHEREVER I GO.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, SOME OF MY

THOUGHTS ABOUT FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS I TURN OVER THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MY OFFICE TO MY SUCCESSOR. THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION WILL BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE MANY IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL ISSUES FACING THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER. I HAVE BEEN URGING UPON THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION AN ACTIVE ROLE FOR THE UNITED STATES IN PURSUIT OF A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE IN THE AREA AND BELIEVE THEY SHARE PRESIDENT FORD'S AND MY SENSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING EARLY ATTENTION TO THIS PROBLEM.

THE FACT THAT A FINAL ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION HAS ELUDED TWO GENERATIONS OF STATESMEN SHOULD NOT DISCOURAGE US. WE CAN TAKE SATISFACTION IN CERTAIN SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PAST FEW YEARS. A MAJOR TURNING POINT OCCURRED IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR WHEN, FOR VIRTUALLY THE FIRST TIME, A WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION DEVELOPED THAT THERE WAS AN ALTERNATIVE TO WAR IN THE SEARCH FOR A FINAL SETTLEMENT. AGREEMENTS WERE REACHED WHICH MANY HAD PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. IT TOOK COURAGE AND FARSIGHTEDNESS ON THE PART OF YOU AND YOUR FELLOW STATESMEN TO BREAK WITH THE PAST AND TURN TO NEGOTIATION FOR A SOLUTION. THANKS TO YOUR CONTRIBUTION, MR. PRESIDENT, A POLITICAL PROCESS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, MOVING TOWARDS A PEACE THE WORLD HAS YEARNED FOR.

I BELIEVE WE ARE APPROACHING AGAIN A MOMENT OF HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CAUSE OF PEACE, IN WHICH THIS POLITICAL PROCESS CAN REGAIN ITS PAST MOMENTUM. THE LONG CON-

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FLICT IN LEBANON IS COMING TO AN END. WITH THE IMPORTANT BACKING OF SYRIA, PRESIDENT SARKIS IS MOVING TO ENFORCE SECURITY IN THE COUNTRY AND TO BEGIN THE TASKS OF REBUILDING LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS AND THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY. HE FACES MONUMENTAL PROBLEMS, BUT SUCCESS IN HIS ENTERPRISE NO LONGER APPEARS SO DISTANT OR SO DIFFICULT AS IT DID ON THE DAY OF HIS INAUGURATION. IT SEEMS NOW WITHIN REACH THAT A UNITED LEBANON WILL BE PRESERVED, LED BY A CENTRAL AUTHORITY THAT CAN ASSURE SECURITY--ALONG WITH POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY--FOR ALL COMMUNITIES. IF THIS OCCURS, SYRIA WILL DESERVE MUCH CREDIT. IN ADDITION, THE MODERATE AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENTS OF THE AREA HAVE DEVELOPED A NEW UNITY AND NEW PURPOSEFULNESS WHICH IS THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR NEW PROGRESS.

I AM HOPEFUL OF WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS. IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ALL OF US HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP BY EMOTIONS SO PASSIONATELY BELIEVED AND SO STRONGLY PURSUED THAT WE HAVE OFTEN WONDERED WHETHER THE FORCES OF REASON WOULD HAVE

THEIR OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. YET THEY WERE HEARD, AND
THEY MUST PREVAIL.

BEGINNING WITH THE LONG DISCUSSIONS YOU AND I HAD ON MY
FIRST VISIT TO DAMASCUS, I HAVE WELCOMED THE STEADY IM-
PROVEMENT IN THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.
FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE COME TO APPRECIATE MORE FULLY THE
PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE ANIMATED SYRIAN NATIONAL POLICIES.
I HOPE THAT SYRIA, FOR ITS PART, WILL HAVE COME TO UNDER-
STAND THAT THE UNITED STATES IS DEVOTED TO THE GOAL OF A
PEACE IN THE AREA BROAD ENOUGH TO EMBRACE THE ASPIRATIONS
OF THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS AS WELL AS ISRAEL.

THERE NEED BE NO BOUNDARIES TO THE COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR
TWO COUNTRIES, AND I BELIEVE THIS FACT WILL STAND SYRIA
AND THE UNITED STATES IN GOOD STEAD AS WE TOGETHER SEEK
RENEWED PROGRESS IN THE PEACE PROCESS. I WILL NO LONGER
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HOLD OFFICIAL OFFICE, BUT I WILL CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE
IN SUPPORT OF THE OBJECTIVES WE DISCUSSED THREE YEARS AGO
AND WHICH SYRIA AND THE UNITED STATES CONTINUE TO HOLD IN
COMMON.

I WILL RETAIN IN MY RETIREMENT A HOST OF WARM MEMORIES OF
OUR ASSOCIATION. I HAVE ADMIRED YOUR COURAGE AND YOUR
INTEGRITY. MRS. KISSINGER JOINS ME IN WISHING
HAPPINESS AND LONG LIFE TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY, AND A
PROSPEROUS AND PEACEFUL FUTURE FOR YOUR COUNTRY.

WARM PERSONAL REGARDS,

HENRY A. KISSINGER. END QUOTE.
KISSINGER

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